



Welcome to O.A.R.S.' Yampa River

MEETING PLACE: Dinosaur Inn - 251 East Main St., Vernal, Utah
MEETING TIME: 7:00 pm the night before your trip
RETURN TIME: Approximately 4:00 - 6:00 pm
RIVER RATING: Class III-IV
SECTION: Deerlodge Park – Split Mountain
RIVER MILES: 72
AGE LIMIT: Minimum age is 7 years / 12 years at high water levels
TRIP LENGTH: 4 or 5 days

Dinosaur National Monument – the name alone conjures a host of images: dinosaur bones preserved in ancient rock walls, deep rivers that cut indecorously through dry desert canyons, ancient sea beds full of prehistoric fossils, frozen in time. But it takes the most active imagination to visualize the splendor and paradoxical beauty of rivers fringed by cottonwoods and box elders thriving in an otherwise arid land of mountains and canyons, once the roaming place of dinosaurs, prehistoric turtles and crocodiles, and creatures three times as old as the apatosaurus.

The Yampa River is the last undammed tributary of the Colorado River system, and its free-flowing waters surge through cauldrons of big, untamed Class III and IV rapids. In its natural state, the Yampa also displays sandy beaches, deep, colorful canyons, habitats for native plants and animals, and other splendid features of a river unfettered by man-made obstructions. Its location in Dinosaur National Monument adds an intriguing archeological element, and side hikes along the river reveal ancient fossils, prehistoric Native American ruins, and petroglyphs carved into cliff walls. All these treasures are encased in a strikingly beautiful river corridor whose tall, vertical walls are a canvas of yellow and red, sometimes dramatically streaked with jet-black coloration known as “desert varnish.”

Why the Yampa?

A gorgeous springtime river, the Yampa comes alive in May, runs well through June and early July, and then tapers off in mid-summer. Here’s why you should dedicate four or five days this spring or early summer to exploring this wondrous river canyon.

WHITEWATER

- The Yampa’s high-water season is short but sweet – from May to mid-July, snowmelt from the Rocky Mountains thunders down through this deep gorge, creating powerful Class III-IV rapids. This is some of the most consistently exciting whitewater of any river trip in Colorado, thrilling boaters with several major rapids each day, plus many smaller waves and ripples. Challenging as the whitewater is, first-time rafters and children as young as eight (older in higher-water periods) will have no problem running the Yampa.

DINOSAUR NATIONAL MONUMENT

- Spanning western Colorado and eastern Utah, Dinosaur exists in a cradle of North American prehistory and history. Captured here is one of the world’s largest concentrations of fossilized dinosaur bones, which has revealed many secrets of this captivating ancient species. Dinosaur National Monument also holds the fossils of sea creatures two to three times older than the dinosaurs, jolted from their former watery graves by upheavals of the earth and stranded in the surface rocks that we walk upon today. During your trip you may

see ancient fossils in a frieze of river rock; and you will also be well positioned for a pre- or post-trip visit to Dinosaur Quarry, where you can actually see the dinosaur bones as they were discovered in 1909, encased in the same sandstone into which they were deposited by the river 150 million years ago.

GEOLOGY

- As you descend the Yampa River, you have the fascinating experience of actually traveling through the river canyon's various layers, each one representing an entire age of the earth's development: the rise and fall of major mountain ranges, the arrival and retreat of oceans at least 12 different times, the alternating development of deserts and swamplands. A billion years are captured in these canyon walls, along with the remnants of various life forms that existed long before humans. Our pathway through time showcases some of the oldest exposed rocks in the world, ones that have been folded, lifted and split by eons of geological forces. At Split Mountain, past the confluence of the Yampa and Green, you'll pass through a hole carved out of a rock wall by the river itself. Beside this fascinating scientific value, the Yampa's geology is also responsible for the beauty of its canyon home: vertical yellow and red sandstone walls that tower as high as 1000 feet and squeeze the river through a surprisingly narrow gorge, tiger-striped walls alternating in blonde rock and black manganese oxide, clear creeks tumbling out of shady side canyons, sheltering sandstone caves, and more.

NATURAL HISTORY

- The Yampa River overflows with natural history – from species that lived long before dinosaurs, to the pre-Columbian people who carved elaborate petroglyphs into the cliffs, to the discoveries of all these past existences in the 20th century. Over 8000 years ago, groups of Paleo-Indians lived in this region, hunting now extinct mammals like giant bison. These groups are believed to have evolved several times with changing climates and technologies. The most recent of these groups to make their home along the Yampa, the Ute Indians thrived in their understanding of how to use the region's changing resources. Western expansion in the late 19th century ended their pastoral way of life. In 1909, paleontologist Earl Douglas unearthed the first of thousands of dinosaur bones just below the surface of Split Mountain, bringing to the world a wealth of information about these prehistoric creatures. Throughout the early- and mid-1900s various river pioneers descended this river, blazing the trail for today's rafting industry on the Yampa. Despite this rich history Dinosaur National Monument and other nearby canyons were nearly destroyed when dams were proposed at Echo Park and Split Mountain. Had the dams been built, priceless Native American archeological sites, rapids on the Green and Yampa Rivers, and the habitat of river-dwelling wildlife would have been destroyed as well as the fossil remains. Thankfully, profound public outcry from conservation groups encouraged Congress to dismiss the dams, leaving intact the precious habitats and artifacts that exist along the river.

HIKING

- Great hikes abound on this section of the Yampa River. A variety of trails lead to waterfalls, caves, Indian petroglyphs, old cowboy sites, side canyon oases and more. Aggressive hikers can even climb to the top of the canyon, where they'll be rewarded by tremendous views of Dinosaur National Monument. Most campsites along the river offer access to these trails and you'll have several opportunities to hike from camp in the afternoon, either on a guided walk or on your own.

Sample Itinerary

We pride ourselves in running a relaxed and always flexible schedule. Every trip is different depending upon the group, other trips on the water and sometimes the weather. The following is a sample of what your trip might be like:

The Day Before Your Trip

We meet for a pre-trip meeting at 7:00 pm the night before your trip at Dinosaur Inn in Vernal. This is an opportunity to meet your fellow travelers and guides and ask any last-minute questions. Your guides will give you a thorough trip orientation, then pass out your waterproof river bags so you can pack your belongings that evening.

Day 1

- We'll begin our day with a scenic two-hour drive from Vernal to our put-in at Deerlodge Park, where your boats and the rest of your O.A.R.S. crew meet you. After a thorough safety talk, our journey begins. Today, the Yampa meanders through wide-open desert scenery, quite distinctive from the deep canyons that adorn most of the river corridor. Blooming cactus is among the eye-catching desert flora that we'll enjoy today as we peacefully float down the river, soaking in the sights, sounds and sensations of our wilderness surroundings.
- Our first day on the Yampa generally sets the pace for the remainder our river trip. Typically, we spend a few hours on the water in the morning, sometimes stopping for a great hike, a visit to a waterfall or Indian petroglyphs, or a refreshing swim. Come lunchtime, we pull over to a sandy beach and enjoy a delicious picnic. After feasting and relaxing on the beach (and perhaps a game of Frisbee or horseshoes), we get back into our boats and watch the desert panoramas slowly develop as we continue down the river. Today's whitewater is relatively mild, but over the course of the next few days, the rapids become bigger and more frequent – perfect for trying out the paddleboat and inflatable kayak! Mid- to late-afternoon, we stop and make camp; you grab your bags and set up your tent while we take care of the kitchen and “living room” – camp chairs and the site for tonight's campfire (if permitted). This is the perfect time for you to lounge on the beach with that book you want to finish forever.
- Before long you will be savoring pleasing hors d'oeuvres and the beverage of your choice – delicious as these refreshments are, they always taste better after a day on the river! Nap, take an exploratory hike, or just sit back and laugh with friends and family as we prepare dinner. After another satisfying feast, the evening is yours to spend however you wish. Maybe music, stories or jokes will bring us together tonight; maybe the popping of the fire, the whisper of the river and the clarity of the big, star-filled sky will encourage silent reflection on the amazing wilderness that is, for now, our home.

Day 2

- Your day begins with the morning light reflecting the colors of sunrise in the river. Fresh coffee and tea are waiting for you when you get up; grab a cup, sit back and take in the glory of the awakening wilderness. Soon breakfast is served – omelets made to order, blueberry pancakes, sizzling bacon, fresh fruit, toast, and juice are among the treats you'll indulge in each morning. Once you've eaten your fill, you'll pack up your things as the guides break down camp, then our new day's adventure begins.

- As we enter the Yampa River canyon, we leave the flatter desert behind, entering a stunning world where rock walls loom above us, rising to heights of 1000 feet. The whitewater also intensifies as the canyon begins; today we challenge three major rapids, not to mention some small but fun riffles.
- Our guides might lead a hike to Stubs Cabin, an old cattle rustler homestead dating back to the early 1900s. One hundred years ago, this isolated canyon was used as a hideout by stealthy old-western outlaws, and several abandoned cabins along the river remind us of this shadier side of the Yampa's cowboy history. Other sites we may visit today or tomorrow include Fremont Indian granaries at Mantle Cave, side canyons bejeweled with tumbling streams and waterfalls, and yawning sandstone caves, some of which once housed Pat Lynch, an old hermit who lived out his days along the Yampa River.

Day 3

- For two days, we've watched the magnificent canyon walls and striking sandstone formations rise up around us, becoming bigger and bolder around every river bend. Today the fascinating geology of this canyon reaches its apex as we float past some of the most astounding rock marvels of all: Grand Overhang, Cleopatra's Couch, and Tiger Wall. The latter is perhaps the most renowned feature of the Yampa River – a sheer cliff wall of pale sandstone, dramatically streaked with jet-black stripes of manganese oxide, or “desert varnish.”
- Not to be outdone by the scenery, the whitewater is also at its best today as we run the gigantic Warm Springs Rapid. A relatively new rapid, Warm Spring was formed in 1965 when heavy side canyon floods strew boulders across the river, creating the Yampa's biggest whitewater.
- Tonight, much like the past two evenings, we'll make camp on a big, sandy beach that likely allows access to a great hiking trail. If our guides don't arrange a hike, you may want to enjoy a self-guided walk, or perhaps you'd rather just relax and wait for dinner – always a trip highlight, as our day's adventures stir up a hearty appetite. Perhaps this evening you'll enjoy grilled salmon with orange zest, wild rice, and a fresh green salad. Or maybe a lean, juicy steak with mushrooms and mixed vegetables will be the main attraction as we watch the twilight turn to dusk above the canyon walls. A savory dessert usually follows dinner – maybe peach cobbler, strawberry shortcake, or something rich and chocolaty. After our meal is over, the group dynamic of our trip is at its best as we gather around the campfire for nighttime conversation and laughter.

Days 4-5

- Reaching the confluence with the Green River, we bid farewell to the Yampa, but not to the beauty and whitewater excitement it offered us – both flourish as we continue down the mighty Green. In fact, with the convergence of the two rivers, the whitewater intensifies and presents us with even more consistently exciting rapids than before.
- Past the confluence, we round Steamboat Rock and continue into Echo Park. Here we may stop to visit the intriguing Fremont rock art near the side of the river. Or perhaps we'll hike to Whispering Cave, passing magnificent sandstone formations along the way. In Whirlpool Canyon, we might take the longest hike of our trip, following beautiful Jones Hole Creek to amazingly well preserved panels of pictographs and petroglyphs.

- After a bit of flat water, we pick up speed as we enter Split Mountain Canyon, the river's gradient becoming considerably steeper. Four or five major rapids deliver plenty of whitewater excitement during our last day on the river. Reaching our take-out point at Split Mountain, we'll take a short ride back to Vernal, returning to the Dinosaur Inn between 4 and 6 PM.

What's Included with the Yampa River Trip?

- All meals from lunch on Day 1 through lunch on your last day
- All transportation from Vernal to the river, from Split Mountain to Vernal
- Professional and knowledgeable guides
- Personal flotation devices (to be worn on the river at all times)
- Excellent equipment and rafts

What's Not Included?

- Transportation to and from Vernal
- Pre- and post-trip accommodations and meals
- Tents, sleeping bags and pads - these may be rented from O.A.R.S.
- Personal items, a complete packing list will be provided

Why Visit Utah and Colorado?

Your Yampa River trip positions you for a visit to both Colorado and Utah, two distinctive states that define the American West in so many ways. Utah is home to some of the most diverse geography to be found anywhere in the United States. Colorado, showplace of the Rockies, offers some of North America's most breathtaking mountain scenery. Both states boast a dozen national parks and monuments. Here are some highlights you may want to check out:

Utah

- Over 150 years ago, Brigham Young and his followers, moving west in search of religious freedom, came to the Great Salt Lake. Hard work and determination turned this relative desert into a productive heartland for the Church of Latter Day Saints. Salt Lake City today stands on the eastern shores of the largest inland body of salt water in the United States and is known as the "crossroads of the West." In downtown, Temple Square is home to the Mormon Temple, Tabernacle and Visitor Center, providing an insider's look at the city's Mormon heritage. The State Capitol is also located downtown and is well worth a visit. Salt Lake boasts museums of fine art and natural history, rounding out an experience in the cultural and historic perspectives of this city.
- Canyonlands National Park and Arches National Park flank Moab on either side—a virtual playground for residents and visitors. Arches takes its name from the highest concentration of natural arches in the world; there are over 2,000 here, interspersed with balanced rocks, spires and fins of shaped sandstone. Incredible views of the snow-capped La Sal Mountains are the backdrop to an already impressive foreground. Canyonlands, divided into 3 distinct areas, is home to Cataract Canyon and the Confluence of the Green and Colorado Rivers. In each of the parks, expansive and memorable views await around every turn on their paved roadways. However, off the highway is where they are at their best, featuring hundreds of miles of some of the most striking backcountry hiking and mountain-biking trails on Earth.

Colorado

- The celebrated splendor of the Rockies is at its best in Rocky Mountain National Park. One of the highest regions in the country, this park exhibits rugged peaks and valleys, wet and dry meadows, streams, natural lakes, glaciers and abundant wildlife in a glorious alpine display. Intensify your Rocky Mountain High with a visit to Pike's Peak, where the stunning view inspired Katherine Lee Bates to write "America the Beautiful."
- The state's pervasive national forests are areas of terrific beauty, offering the outdoor lover a grand selection of activities through which to enjoy their quiet green splendor. Arapaho, Gunnison, Rio Grande and San Juan are just a few of Colorado's national forests, offering hiking, mountain biking, river recreation, and much more.

Why O.A.R.S.?

O.A.R.S. has been in business since 1969 and that is no accident. Great trips on some of the world's best rivers, coastlines and mountains are the recipe for this success. Always focused on our clients and their vacations, it is our genuine—if not biased—belief that river trips and wilderness vacations are extremely valuable life experiences. That said we have committed ourselves over the years to providing the best trips available, always with an eye on improvement. Here are a few things we believe set our trips apart:

EXPERIENCE

- In 1969, O.A.R.S. became the first small-raft, oar-powered rafting outfitter to offer river trips through the Grand Canyon. The immediate success of these trips inspired founder and president George Wendt to expand his business into the largest and most geographically diverse rafting company in the West. With trips on over 36 rivers, coastlines and mountains, over three decades of experience in the industry, and staff members who have been with us from the very beginning, O.A.R.S. is one of the most accomplished and respected companies in the outdoors.

STAFF

- As anyone who has been on an O.A.R.S. trip can tell you, our guides and support staff are the best in the business. Their knowledge, skills, demeanor and attitude are qualities of which we are very proud. From our professional, well-informed Adventure Consultants, to those behind the scenes, to the guides on your trip, our entire staff strives to always exceed your expectations. Your river guides are fantastic chefs, entertainers and teachers all rolled into one—and so good at their jobs you'd think they were born on the river. Each guide on your trip offers a different perspective on this area and why they've made it their workplace, their home, their passion. Our employees are the number one reason O.A.R.S. has repeat customers – take a trip with us and you'll see why.

MEALS

- The meals we serve are hearty and sumptuous, complete with fresh fruits and vegetables. Our menu spares no expense in order to bring you fine foods in a wilderness atmosphere. Wake up to pancakes, omelets or eggs cooked to order, complemented by bacon or sausage, toast, juice and plenty of coffee or tea. Sate your appetite at lunch with a delicious spread of cold cuts and cheese on assorted breads, with hummus and veggies in soft pitas, or tasty taco salad in roll-your-own burritos; don't forget a cookie or six for dessert, or a fruit salad and a cool drink. At the dinner table, our guides' cooking skills truly shine. Snack on hors d'oeuvres while you wait for fresh green salads, vegetables, and the main course: steak, grilled salmon or perhaps Dutch oven lasagna. Vegetarian options are available if you tell us of your preference ahead of time. If you

can find room, there will always be something for dessert - possibly even a freshly baked cake or cobbler.

EQUIPMENT

- O.A.R.S. boats and equipment are top-of-the-line and rigorously maintained. Rest assured knowing that we use only the best and most reliable. All river-related gear is included and we offer many accessories to ensure your comfort on dry land as well. To give your camp by the river most of the comforts of home we either provide or rent sturdy tents, warm sleeping bags and thick sleeping pads. Please check with your Adventure Consultant or refer to your catalog for details regarding what will be included on your trip.
- You can shop online for all your adventure travel needs at www.oars.com in the **OARStore**.

How Do I Get to the Yampa?

The meeting and ending point for the Yampa River trip is Vernal, Utah.

By Auto

- From Salt Lake City, Utah, take Hwy 40 east, 180 miles to Vernal. From Grand Junction, Colorado take Hwy 70 west and exit at Hwy 191/US 6 to Price, Utah. From Price, take 191 north to Hwy 40 east.

By Air

- The closest airport is in Salt Lake City, which is serviced by most major airlines. You can rent a car at the airport and drive to Vernal, leaving it parked at the Dinosaur Inn during the trip.
- Slickrock Air 866-259-1626 and Salmon Air 800-448-3413 (www.salmonair.com) offer flights from Salt Lake City to Vernal.

By Charter Van

- If you're travelling with a group, you can charter a van from Wilkins Bus Lines, (435) 789-2476. The cost is \$250 one-way per vehicle for 1-15 passengers. We recommend you make your reservations well in advance.

Return Transportation

Your trip cost includes an optional \$81.00 per person transportation fee for a shuttle from Vernal to the river launch point before you trip, and from the river take-out point back to Vernal after your trip.

A Few Important Details

Reservations & Deposit

- A \$250/person deposit is required at the time of reservation. The balance is due 60 days prior to departure.

Cancellations, Transfers & Refunds

- If you find it necessary to cancel your trip, notify us as soon as possible. You can telephone, but we also need a written notice. The cancellation fee after you've made your deposit can range up to the entire trip cost, based upon the number of days prior to your trip that we receive your cancellation notice. We regret we cannot make exceptions for personal emergencies. For this reason, we strongly urge our participants to investigate trip insurance (see Insurance).
- Cancellations 60 days or more prior to the trip earn a full refund less a \$100/person fee. Cancellations 59 days or less, prior to your trip are not refundable.
- If you transfer from one trip to another, there is a \$50/person charge up until 60 days before the trip. Transfers made after this time will be treated as cancellations.

Medical

- Under most circumstances, if you are of an adventurous spirit and in reasonably good health, you should have no problem enjoying an O.A.R.S. trip. Pregnant women and those with heart trouble should have their physician's approval before taking a river trip.

Insurance

- Although every effort is made to insure a safe trip for all, we strongly recommend that you protect yourself, your belongings, and your vacation through the purchase of a short-term traveler's policy. A trip cancellation policy covers your non-refundable payments in most cases, should you have to cancel your trip at the last minute due to illness or injury. Trip participants should realize that in the event of illness or injury on a river trip, evacuation could be prolonged, difficult and expensive. Personal belongings and cameras are carried entirely at the owner's risk, and O.A.R.S. accepts no responsibility for lost, damaged, delayed or stolen property.

Acknowledgment of Risk

- Everyone is required to sign a standard Acknowledgement of Risk before the trip, acknowledging awareness that some risks are associated with the trip. Safety is of the utmost concern on our trips. However, due to the nature of the activities, a condition of your participation is that you will sign this form before the trip begins. Anyone who refuses to sign the form will not be allowed to participate, and consistent with O.A.R.S. cancellation policy, there will be no refund of the trip fees at that time.

Responsibility – An Important Notice

- O.A.R.S. Canyonlands, Inc., and cooperating agencies act only in the capacity of agent for the participants in all matters relating to transportation and/or all other related travel services, and assume no responsibility however caused for injury, loss or damage to person or property in connection with any service, including but not limited to that resulting directly or indirectly from acts of God, detention, annoyance, delays and expenses arising from quarantine, strikes, theft, pilferage, force majeure, failure of any means of conveyance to arrive or depart as scheduled, civil disturbances, government restrictions or regulations, and discrepancies or change in transit over which it has no control. Reasonable changes in itinerary may be made where deemed advisable for the comfort and well being of the participants, including cancellation due to water fluctuation, insufficient bookings, and other factors. There is risk in whitewater rafting, particularly during high-water conditions. Rafts, dories and kayaks do capsize. You could be swept overboard. Your guide will make every attempt to assist, but you must be strong and agile enough to "self-help" and "float-it-out" without further endangering yourself or others. Please be advised our U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal floatation devices are rated to accommodate persons no heavier than 260 pounds and with a chest size no larger than 56 inches. We are experienced at accommodating people with various handicaps. Please give us an opportunity to make you feel welcome. We need to discuss any special requirements ahead of time. We may decide, at any time, to exclude any person or group for any reason we feel is related to the safety of our trips. On advancement of deposit the depositor agrees to be bound by the above recited terms and conditions. Prices are subject to change without notice.

Contact Information:

- For more information on this or any of our over 75 rafting, sea kayaking or multi-sport adventures, please call us at **1-800-346-6277** or email us at info@oars.com and one of our knowledgeable Adventure Consultants will be happy to help you.